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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/806,486	04/12/2001	Wolfgang Hubinger	205411US0PCT	5934
22850	7590	04/27/2004	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			TRAN, LEN	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1725	

DATE MAILED: 04/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/806,486	HUBINGER ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Len Tran	1725

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 12 April 2001.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 12-28 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 12-23 and 26-28 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) 24 and 25 is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claims 12, 17, 22, 23, and 26-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Sontag (US 1,749,266).

Sontag discloses a countercurrent stripping pipe capable for removing volatile organic comprising a column pipe composed of plurality of pipe sections connected to one another by flange connections, in which pipe section trays are arranged, a plurality of successive trays being connected to one another to form at least two separate inserts which can be moved from the column pipe, first connections for supplying and removing the reaction products, and second connections for supplying at least one stripping agent in countercurrent to the reaction products. Sontag further teaches diameter of the trays of one insert corresponds substantially to an internal diameter of the column pipe. A widened column top including an aperture which can be closed and whose diameter is configured to permit removal of the inserts. The inserts stand on top of one another in the column pipe (figures and page 2, lines 125 – page 3, line 115).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

5. Claims 13-16 and 18-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sontag (US '266), and further in view of Leva (US 3,928,513).

Sontag discloses the claimed invention above, but lacks the mentioning of wherein 10 inserts and each insert has at least 3-10 trays, and diameter of the insert is from 100 to 2500 mm. However, Sontag discloses four inserts to be within the column pipe. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have more than four inserts, depending on the need and energy required to perform the reaction. Therefore, the number of inserts would have depend on the material reacted within the apparatus.

In addition, Leva discloses the number of plates per stack and the diameter of each plate within 100 to 2500 mm in diameter (col. 4, lines 21-32) for the purpose of reducing the time required for assembling the plates.

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time applicant's invention was made to provide plates having diameter between 100 to 2500 mm as taught by Leva, in Sontag in order to reduce time for assembling the plates.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 24 and 25 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The prior arts of record fail to teach an internal diameters of successive pipe sections decrease from top to bottom and a removable insert is arranged in each pipe section.

Inquiry

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Len Tran whose telephone number is (571) 272-1184. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30 - 5.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tom Dunn can be reached on (571) 272-1171. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Len Tran
Examiner
Art Unit 1725

LT
April 19, 2004

Kiley Stoner AU 1725
Kiley Stoner 4/21/04